

A headset

The invention relates to a communications unit constructed as a slave station which is adapted to be coupled to a plurality of master stations, said communications unit having a memory with a plurality of address fields in which one or more identification keys may be stored, said master station or stations having an identification cell with an identification key, wherein a coupling is established between one of the master stations and the communications unit in that the identification key of the master station is stored in one of the address fields of the communications unit.

The system principles of a network including a headset as mentioned above are described e.g. in the published US Patent Application No. 2002/0061009 A1.

Today, many mobile telephones use headsets in connection with a call and an answer to a call, as the user of the mobile telephone may hereby have his or hers hands free for other tasks during a call, which may be e.g. be the operation of a PC.

Previously, the headset was connected to the mobile telephone via a wire, but after the provision of short-ranged communications connections it has become widespread practice to use these instead of a wired connection.

The two most widely used wireless connections are the so-called Bluetooth and DECT standards, where Bluetooth has a range of about 10 metres, while the DECT standard has a range of about 150 metres.

Known today are also wireless communications connections between public switched telephones and headsets, where the wireless connections are likewise based on Bluetooth and DECT.

Such a connection between a public switched telephone and a headset is established by inserting an adapter circuit between the public switched telephone and the headset, said adapter circuit being connected by a wire to the public switched telephone and wirelessly to the headset. This adapter station may generally be configured as a holder for the headset and may contain a charging circuit for the headset. An example of such an adapter station may be seen in US Design Patent No. D 433005.

To additionally improve the user friendliness of a headset in connection with a public switched telephone, an electrical circuit may be inserted which "lifts the receiver" at a call to the public switched telephone so that the user need not walk over to the public switched telephone to answer a call, but may do so directly from the headset.

Another option is to add a mechanical lifting device to the public switched telephone to lift the receiver, e.g. if the given public switched telephone is not suitable for an electrical solution. An example of a mechanical lifting device is described in WO 99/49642.

Although mobile telephony has gained widespread use and has clearly overtaken the public switched telephones in terms of growth, it is still so that the public switched telephone has a better sound quality in spite of considerable technical improvements of the mobile telephone technique. In addition, it is considerably cheaper to use the public switched telephone than the mobile telephone.

Although many mobile telephone users have access to the public switched telephone and quite often are present in the vicinity of the public switched telephone, be it at home or at the office, it is so that the public switched telephone is frequently "forgotten" when a call is to be made. The reason for this may be of a purely habitual nature, but another factor coming into

play is presumably that mobile telephones are equipped with more sophisticated call options and provide easier access to telephone numbers, as they are easy to store and find in the mobile telephone.

5 In the light of this, it is desirable to be able to design a telephone system where all the advantages of the mobile telephone are incorporated, and where calls from the public switched telephone become a more natural act, while maintaining the same comfort.

10 The object of the invention is achieved by a headset of the type defined in the introductory portion of claim 1, which is characterized in that at least one of the address fields of the communications unit is configured with an address field and an associated electrical lock, and that the address may be overwritten only if the master station has a unique identification key to
15 open the electrical lock.

Hereby, it is possible to establish an automatic coupling between the communications unit and the master station, as the address field in the communications unit is hereby reserved to be coupled only to a communications
20 unit which has the unique identification key.

When, as stated in claim 2, the fixed address field is predefined to be coupled only to specific master stations, it is advantageously ensured that only selected master stations having the unique identification key may be
25 coupled to the communications unit.

Expediently, as stated in claim 3, the coupling is established with a short-ranged communications connection of the Bluetooth type or of the DECT type, and additionally it is user-friendly if, as stated in claim 4, the communications unit is a headset.
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With a view to adapting a master station with an identification cell to a communications unit with as few electrical changes in the master station as possible, it is an advantage if, as stated in claim 5, the master station is an adapter master station having a unique identification key, and that the
5 adapter master station is coupled, optionally wirelessly, to the other master station, preferably to a public switched telephone.

It is an advantage to a user wishing to make call, e.g. by activating a button on the headset, if, as stated in claim 6, the adapter master station emits
10 indication signals to the communications unit, allowing it be verified in the communications unit, e.g. via sound emission, whether it may be connected to the adapter master station, and if so a prioritized connection to the adapter master station is provided.

15 This advantage is particularly pronounced if, as stated in claim 7, the master station is a public switched telephone, a mobile telephone or the like.

To improve the user's comfort when connections are established to various master stations, it is an advantage if, as stated in claim 8, the adapter
20 master station has a volume control unit to adjust the strength of a signal between the communications unit and a master station, e.g. a public switched telephone, relative to the strength of the signal between the headset and another master station, e.g. a mobile telephone.

25 To improve the comfort, in the sense that it should be just as attractive to use the public switched telephone for calls as it is to use the mobile telephone, it is an advantage if, as stated in claim 9, the adapter master station has an electrical circuit or a mechanical structure adapted to lift or hang up the receiver of the public switched telephone, which provides the advantage
30 that when receiving a call the user need not physically walk over to the public switched telephone.

This advantage is enhanced additionally if, as stated in claim 10, the adapter master station emits a sound at a call.

5 If, as stated in claim 11, the adapter master station has a charging unit to charge the headset, the need of acquiring an independent charging unit is eliminated, and at the same time the user is currently made aware of the presence of the public switched telephone.

10 The invention will now be explained more fully with reference to the drawing, in which

fig. 1 shows the principle of the functionality of the communications unit according to the invention, while

15 fig. 2 shows an example of how the coupling between a headset, a public switched telephone and a headset is set up.

In fig. 1, the numeral 1 designates a communications unit, here as a headset of the wireless type, which may communicate with e.g. another communications unit in the form of a master station by means of a Bluetooth or DECT coupling, schematically indicated by the arrows 11, 12. The headset has a plurality of address fields, some of which, shown at 8, may be addressed, as is known, while other address fields, only one of which is shown and designated 9, have an address which may be changed only under certain conditions, cf. below.

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This address requires an identification key which a master station must possess in order to be able to establish a coupling between the master station and the communications unit.

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In fig. 1, the communications unit is coupled in two so-called piconet net-

works, which are designated 5 and 6, respectively. One piconet network 5 is shown to include a master station, here a mobile telephone 2, and a headset 1, while the other piconet network 6 is shown to include the headset 1 and an adapter master station 4, whose function will be explained later, as well as an external unit which is coupled to the adapter master station 4 and is shown as a public switched telephone 3.

It will now be explained how the communication takes place in the piconet network 5. If a headset moves into the area 5 in which the mobile telephone 2 is present and an activation signal is applied from the headset 1, then an identification key will be transferred via a short-ranged communications connection from the mobile telephone 2 to an address field in the headset 1, thereby setting up the communications connection between the headset 1 and the mobile telephone 2.

Thus, a user may either let his mobile telephone 2 remain in his pocket or leave it on a table and receive a call to the mobile telephone 2 via the headset 1.

If the user leaves the area and moves into another area, the same process may be repeated in that a new identification key is stored in the headset 1 for coupling to another master station, which may be a mobile telephone, a PC or the like.

In the case where all address fields in the headset, typically eight in number, are used, a request for coupling to a further master station will mean that one of them, e.g. the oldest address field, is overwritten.

If also a speech recognition circuit is connected to transfer commands from the headset to the mobile telephone, it is moreover possible to make a call from the headset without it being necessary to operate the mobile tele-

phone.

The above-mentioned fixed address field 9 is used for interconnecting a headset and a master station which has a unique identification key, said
5 fixed address field having an associated electrical lock which can only be opened by a unique identification key. In other words, only a master station having a unique identification key will be able to store its address in the adapter master station 4. Thus, the address field 9 cannot be overwritten without the electrical lock having been opened.

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The adapter master station may generally be equipped with a circuit (not shown) which emits indication signals, shown schematically at 13, which can be captured by the headset, which can in turn apply a sound signal to a user who will then be made aware that it is possible to use the public
15 switched telephone when making a call or answering a call. Optionally, the sound signal may just be emitted when the user enters or leaves the coverage area of the communications connection between the adapter master station and the headset.

20 Additionally, the adapter master station 4 may be equipped with a volume control, indicated by the reference numeral 14, which allows a user to adapt the volume from the public switched telephone 3 to the same level as the volume from the mobile telephone 2, as the user just makes a couple of calls, partly on the public switched telephone and partly on the mobile tele-
25 phone until the volume from the two telephones has been adjusted to be the same.

As shown in fig. 1, the master station may be a public switched telephone 3 which may be coupled to the headset through its identification key, and
30 since the identification key may be stored in the headset, the connection to the headset may be established merely by the user moving into an area in

which the short-ranged communications connection may be established.

Where appropriate, the headset may be adapted to apply a signal to the user when the communications connection has been established, so that
5 the user is aware of the coupling to an alternative connection which the user himself has not set up.

The adapter master station 4 is a unit having an input and an output, said input being a wireless communications gate which is adapted to communi-
10 cate with the headset 1 via a short-ranged communications connection 12. The output is shown here as a wired connection 7 coupled to a public switched telephone 3.

Optionally, an electrical or mechanical lifting mechanism is provided for the
15 public switched telephone, so that the receiver 10 may be lifted off without the user himself having to do this physically.

Fig. 2 shows a setup with physical communications units connected as de-
scribed in connection with the principles which have been described in con-
20 nection with fig. 1.

As will be seen in fig. 2, the headset 1, the mobile telephone 2, the public
switched telephone 3 with the receiver 10, and the adapter master station 4
are included. The headset 1 is arranged in the adapter master station 4,
25 which is constructed such that the headset 1 may be placed in it, and can charge the headset 1 via a charging circuit (not shown).

A number of examples of possible functionalities of the setup shown in fig.
1 and in fig. 2 are given below.

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A user is present in an area where he is coupled to receive calls from a plu-

5 rality of mobile telephones and a public switched telephone. At the moment when one of the mobile telephones or the public switched telephone is ringing, the user answers the call by activating a button on the headset, following which the correct connection is established, since all mobile tele-
phones and the public switched telephone are separately identifiable via the addresses which are stored in the headset. As an option, the user may decide to redirect a call from the mobile telephone to the public switched telephone so as to achieve the best sound quality.

10 If the user wishes to make an outgoing call, there are several options.

15 The setup may be designed such that at the moment when the user activates a call button on his headset, the communications connection will automatically be established between the headset and the public switched telephone via the adapter master station, whereby the user obtains the best sound quality and charge for the call.

20 Another option is that the communications connection is established to the unit which is closest to the user. In the last-mentioned case, it is most practical if the user is informed via the headset of the mobile telephone to which a connection has been established.

25 Finally, it is possible to make a call from an arbitrary unit by means of a speech recognition circuit, also without the user necessarily knowing from which unit he calls.

30 Although the invention has been explained particularly in connection with piconet networks which include mobile and public switched telephony, nothing prevents the invention from being applied, within the scope defined by the claims, in piconet networks including a plurality of slave stations, a plurality of master stations and a plurality of adapter master stations which

are interconnected via wireless short-ranged communications connections and optionally partly connected via wires. There is also the option that the electrical lock may be configured as a lock which is activated by a PIN code.